

Robson et al.
USSN: 09/895,544
Filed June 29, 2001

Remarks

The specification was amended to claim priority based upon Applicants' PCT application as recited in the Declaration. A copy of the PCT application is enclosed. The specification was also amended to provide antecedent basis for amended claim 1.

Amendments to claim 1 and in paragraph 15 of the specification are supported by original claim 32 and by Table 1, disclosing pseudo-boehmite binder contents ranging between 0.8 and 5 wt. %. There is no "new matter" in the specification or claims. Applicants also amended claims 6-31 and 33-34 to avoid any further basis for objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c), in accordance with the Examiner's request. The amended claims no longer include any multiple dependent claims depending from another multiple dependent claim.

Claim 1 was amended to distinguish Applicants' invention from Brunelle et al. U.S. 4,378,307; Katoh U.S. 5,925,592, and Hall et al. U.S. 5,858,325, considered alone or in valid combination with each other.

Brunelle discloses a sol having an Al_2O_3 content between 10 and 25%. This content greatly exceeds the 0.8 – 5 wt.% limitation in Applicants' claims and is unsuitable for practice of the present invention.

Katoh discloses a process for preparing an alumina catalyst carrier wherein pseudo-boehmite particles having 2 different aspect ratios are mixed with water so that the water content of the final dough is 45-60% by weight. Accordingly, the pseudo-boehmite content in Example 1 is at least 40% by weight, greatly exceeding the limitations of amended claim 1.

Hall et al. U.S. 5,858,325 claims a process for agglomerating alumina powder or dust wherein an inorganic binder comprising a polymer of a hydroxy salt of aluminum is mixed with an aqueous slurry of the alumina in sufficient quantity to agglomerate the alumina into granules. The binder is formed by action of a base such as NaOH on an aluminum salt such as the chloride, nitrate, sulphate, or oxalate (col. 2, lines 15-19) or by action of an acid on alumina trihydrate (col. 2, lines 19-21). The

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inventors speculate at col.7, lines 40-41 that a film of pseudo-boehmite adheres to particles of unactivated alumina when an aluminum hydroxychloride based binder acts alone as a binder for the particles. Hall et al. did not add pseudo-boehmite as a binder separately to the particles and any pseudo-boehmite formed in situ does not amount to at least 0.8 wt.% of the mixture as required in amended claim 1.

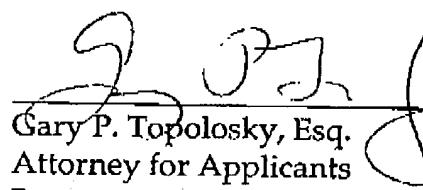
Applicants request early notice allowance.

Customer Number

08840

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Respectfully submitted,


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